Monday of the First Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 1:14-20): After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.

“The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

Fr. Joan COSTA i Bou
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, the Gospel invites us to conversion: “Change your ways and believe the Good News” (Mk 1:15). Convert to what? It would perhaps be better to say, to whom? To Christ! This is how He said it: “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (Mk 10:37). To convert means to gratefully receive the gift of Faith and live a life of love and service. To convert means to accept Christ as our only Lord and King of our hearts, so that we become a useful servant to Him. To convert implies discovering Christ in every event in human history —and in our own personal history too— while realizing He is the origin, the core and the end of all History, and that everything has been redeemed by Him; in Him, everything attains its maximum plenitude. To convert also implies living with hope, for He has defeated Sin, the Evil One and Death, and the Eucharist is His guarantee.

To convert also involves loving Our Lord more than anything else in this world, with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength. To convert requires delivering our understanding and our will to Him, in such a way that our behavior makes true the Episcopal motto of St. John Paul II, Totus tuus, that is, All yours my God. And "all" means: time, qualities, possessions, illusions, projects, health, family, work, leisure… everything. Therefore, to convert requires us to love God's will in Christ over all things, while enjoying it, which means to be grateful for whatever He may care to send us —even if it is contradictions, humiliations or ailments— and take them as treasures, which allow us to express more clearly our love for God: If You want it like that, so do I!

As it happened with the apostles Simon, Andrew, James and John, changing means to leave “immediately

the nets” and follow Him (cf. Mk 1:18), once we hear His voice. To convert, after all, is that Christ be everything for us.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Just as sins with their pestilence hide the value of salvation, by mourning them they are transformed into valuable gold.” (Saint Gregory the Great)

- “God in his love prepares the way, and he prepares our lives for each of us. He does not make us Christians through spontaneous generation. He prepares our path, he prepares our lives over time.” (Francis)

- “Confession is called the sacrament of conversion because it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father from whom one has strayed by sin. It is called the sacrament of Penance, since it consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, № 1423)